

older, and 87 percent of that time it is the family members who are the primary caregivers.

The emotional stress of care giving is so high, and about one-third of caregivers develop symptoms of depression. Care giving also takes a financial toll, with many individuals having to quit work, reduce their work hours, or take time off because of their responsibilities.

Madam Speaker, we must continue the fight against this devastating disease before it claims more lives, more lives of our mothers, our fathers, our sisters, our brothers and our spouses. I again encourage all in our community to show solidarity in the fight we must win against Alzheimer's.

□ 2000

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MASSA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MASSA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. INGLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. INGLIS. Madam Speaker, the report by the chief actuary of Medicare is in and, as we thought, it shows real problems with the idea of expanding Medicare coverage to lower age groups. This summer, I had an opportunity to do a bunch of town hall meetings, and in those meetings we discussed the fact that what we're talking about really, in the public option, is adding more people to something like the SS Medicare which is already sinking in the harbor. But now over in the other body, there is specifically a proposal to literally add more people to the sinking SS Medicare in the harbor.

And so in the last several days, the chief actuary has provided a report that really should stop us in our tracks and cause us to realize that that's no solution, to add people to a program that is already unsustainable.

What that chief actuary of Medicare reports—and there are several items in his report, obviously, but one of them is the report cautions that savings needed to extend the trust fund cannot simultaneously be used to extend other health insurance coverage. In other words, if you're going to save money, you can't simultaneously expand coverage under the program. It seems fairly obvious to the folks I was talking to in town hall meetings. Unfortunately here in Washington, it seems not to be comprehended. We seem to think that here in Washington we can continue to add people to a program even though the people that are currently on the program have it on a trajectory that can't be sustained.

The actuary also points out that actually the Senate bill would increase

the cost of health care; would not decrease the cost of health care. In fact, total spending on health care would increase by \$234 billion between 2010 and 2019. Also, total Federal expenditures on health care would increase \$365.8 billion during that period. The bill would extend coverage to 33 million Americans by 2019 but would still leave 24 million people uninsured, 5 million of which may be illegal immigrants. And the number of people with employer-sponsored health care would drop by 5 million by 2019.

What the chief actuary is telling us is that the solution that's being proposed is not a solution. In order to solve the challenge of Medicare, you have to figure out some way to change the underlying behavior. You have to figure out a way to get the patient invested in their care and caring how much it costs. That's what we've got to do for Medicare, Medicaid and for private insurance.

There are some very creative things going on in the private sector that are toward this end, to have this objective of changing the underlying behavior. What we're discussing here in the Congress under the majority here in the House and the apparent majority over in the Senate is not something that will change behavior. What it will do is simply add more people to a program that is already unsustainable. So rather than saving money, as the President suggests it will, actually what will happen, as the chief actuary says, is the costs rise; not everybody gets covered. It's clearly not a solution.

So what we have to do is scrap the current plans and go back to something that might actually work: by getting a change in behavior, by figuring out how to get people covered, by figuring out how to do medical malpractice reform and by getting 50-State competition among private insurance companies. Those, Madam Speaker, are the solutions we want to see in this country. We must stop this false solution that's being offered now.

THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS HOUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure again to be the anchor for the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order Hour. I want to thank our chairwoman, BARBARA LEE, for talking with us the last week or two about jobs and how important jobs is going to be for this nation.

I would at this time like to welcome and ask our Chair, the Honorable BARBARA LEE from California, to please now join me. She has directed us in so many different ways over this year, I am just especially pleased to be a part of this caucus.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much.

Let me take a moment to thank Congresswoman FUDGE for really consistently raising the alarm and setting forth what the agenda is every Monday night of the Congressional Black Caucus, which is an agenda that speaks not only to the issues in communities of color in the Congressional Black Caucus but issues which really will allow for the American Dream to be real for all.

So thank you, Congresswoman FUDGE, and I know you come from a State where the unemployment rate is critical. People are suffering, housing foreclosure rates are off the scale, and especially in the African American community. Communities of color have been hardest hit, I know, in Ohio. So thank you so much for your leadership.

Let me just talk for a few minutes about our economy. We all know that the economic security of all Americans is extremely fragile. Communities of color, especially the African American community and Latino communities, have been disproportionately hit by this recession. Last week, we released a letter which we forwarded to President Obama, Speaker PELOSI and Chairman MILLER which outlined our priorities as members of the Congressional Black Caucus. We are continuing to work with House leaders and the administration to ensure that our priorities for job creation and economic growth are included in a jobs package which should be finalized hopefully before Congress adjourns this year.

After the release of our letter, it was interesting to read some of the bloggers, some of the pundits. They actually argued that targeted relief was unneeded. And what we propose is not based on race. I just want to be clear on that. It's based on need. We want to ensure that our resources are targeted to areas of greatest hardship.

For example, here are some of the facts regarding the African American community that are indisputable:

The unemployment rate for African Americans is nearly twice that of whites. 49.4 percent of African Americans 16 to 19 years of age were unemployed in November.

Nearly 28 percent of African Americans received food aid compared to 15 percent of Latinos and 8 percent of whites.

Recent African American college graduates are unemployed at higher rates than their white counterparts and African American workers remain unemployed an average of 5 weeks longer than the rest of Americans.

More than 24 percent of African Americans are living below the poverty line and African Americans are 55 percent more likely to be unemployed than white Americans.

African Americans have 2.3 times the infant mortality rate as non-Hispanic whites. They are four times as likely to die as infants due to complications related to low birthweight as compared to non-Hispanic white infants.

Additionally, African Americans have shorter life spans.

The Congressional Black Caucus in its continued role as the Conscience of the Congress is morally obligated to address these systemic inequalities. Moreover, as members who represent so many constituents who are disproportionately suffering, we have an obligation as policymakers to write legislation to address these moral gaps. That is why I convened a task force to develop targeted proposals to address the acutely unemployed and the crisis in our communities and throughout the country and also to spur job creation for the chronically unemployed who happen to be black and Latino, many are white, and many are Asian Pacific Islanders. This task force is chaired by Congressman EMANUEL CLEAVER.

We must maintain support for vital extensions of unemployment insurance and the COBRA health insurance subsidies as millions of Americans continue to face job loss and extended periods of unemployment. We also must continue to invest in education and job training programs that fully support housing initiatives like the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program to bring some stability to our hardest hit communities.

We must raise and index the minimum wage so that every working person can be assured that they will earn a wage that will lift them up and out of poverty each and every year without having to rely on the legislature to keep up with increases in the cost of living. We need to ensure access to early education, guarantee a high quality public education for every American student, and make sure that every working family has access to the affordable, quality child care that they need so that they can get to their jobs. Also, we need to reconnect with our disconnected youth and the formerly incarcerated individuals with increased support for job training and education for a new wave of environmentally friendly and economically green jobs which are going to be competitive but also which will require skills and the knowledge and the qualifications to be able to be eligible for these jobs. That's why we suggested a strong training program for these jobs. And we must remove Federal barriers to provide for a second chance.

Last week, President Obama delivered a speech that was another sober reminder of the important work we must do and we must continue to work to grow our economy and create jobs. And we agree with the President that support for small businesses, infrastructure investment and green jobs is essential. We also believe that as Members of Congress we must do more.

In order to do this, the Congressional Black Caucus has outlined four areas of focus laid out in our letter. They are: Direct job creation and training; infrastructure; small businesses; and State

and local relief. These areas are essential to create real and meaningful economic opportunities to provide pathways out of poverty and opportunities for all.

The Congressional Black Caucus remains committed to working with President Obama and our congressional leadership—Speaker PELOSI and Chairman MILLER—to address the real economic crisis gripping our nation. We will not shy away from the fight for targeted relief for the chronically unemployed. In our letter, we suggested that there be a requirement that the amounts appropriated shall allocate no less than 10 percent for assistance in qualified areas of economic hardship, provided that for the purpose of these sections “qualified areas of economic hardship” means any census tract or block numbering area where 20 percent or more of the population is at or below the Federal poverty line. The term “poverty line” means the official poverty line defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

So let me be clear. What we propose is not based on race. It is based on need. We are asking for no more or no less than what Wall Street got. When there was a crisis on Wall Street, the Nation responded with a sense of urgency. We're asking for that same sense of urgency to the economic crisis that is gripping the hardest hit communities in America. There was no problem when that money was targeted to Wall Street. We're asking for the same targeted help for communities under the gun. It would be a tragedy if the economy recovers and we leave communities of color behind. We know money is going to be spent for jobs. The question is, where will the money be spent? And we want to make sure that we leave no community behind.

We will certainly become stronger as a nation if we ensure that a jobs bill recognizes these huge disparities. I believe strongly that it is our moral obligation to tackle poverty and unemployment and that in the richest country in the world, we simply have no excuse not to do so.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the members of the Congressional Black Caucus are committed to continuing to work together with our President and our congressional leaders to fix our economy and to create jobs that address the true depth of this recession. There is no question that by our collective efforts, we can make a real difference in the lives of all Americans.

Thank you, Congresswoman FUDGE, for your leadership and for giving me a few minutes to speak tonight.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. I want to thank you for your call to action.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FUDGE. I would ask, Madam Speaker, that Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material for the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, I would now like to yield to my friend and colleague from Wisconsin, Representative MOORE.

□ 2015

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Well, thank you, gentlelady from Ohio for yielding. And I can tell you that I found the remarks of our Chair very, very compelling, and I guess I would agree with her. But I want to add that while a couple of the categories of the Congressional Black Caucus include infrastructure jobs and providing funds for local programs, and while I believe that there is a general call for these types of spending to stimulate our economy, I've heard on both sides of the aisle calls for moneys to be used for infrastructure improvements.

I would say, with a qualification, that we need to make sure the funds for infrastructure projects go directly to cities and counties and allow those governments the flexibility to determine where the greatest infrastructure needs are for their communities. I think that while the Recovery Act saved between 600,000 and 1.6 million jobs, we ought to learn from some of the mistakes that were made there, and I think that the Congressional Black Caucus, in its wisdom, has pointed out that we need to target our initiatives more and not just give the moneys to those States that don't necessarily target those funds, and make sure that it gets to the cities and States to work on infrastructure programs that are needed.

The other qualification that I would give, and I think that the Chair raised it in her comments, is that we need to make sure that the infrastructure projects include those people—that they target them to those communities that are in need. And with that, I would say that we need to target, we need to create programs for pre-apprenticeship programs so that all of the moneys don't go to those, all of it doesn't go to those laborers and those folks who are typically building within our communities, those people who already have some of the skill sets and education that can transition them into the new energy-related initiatives, but that we ought to look at pre-apprenticeship programs so that we can expose individuals with low skill sets to other workers with family-supporting jobs by working alongside with them nearby and on the same projects.

From those experienced workers, the pre-apprentice participants can learn a pathway on how to move forward and develop those skill sets that will move them up the career ladder, and at the same time, provide them with sustainable income. To help enforce this, lady from Ohio, I believe that contractors could be required to include a certain percentage of pre-apprenticeship participants in their so-called Federal

floor participation of women and minority workers that is already required by executive order.

The reality is that we cannot afford to wait while the unemployment rate for minorities continues to rise. Unemployment, reemployment is a lagging indicator, and we can't wait until we reduce these numbers. The unemployment rate among black males is currently 15.6 percent. And by April of 2009, the gap between black and white men grew to a 13-year high of 7 percent. The time is now. And I urge my colleagues to consider all proposals that present the American people with a jobs bill that not only creates jobs, but sets up training programs and education programs that will help dislocated workers gain new skills that will lead to sustainable employment.

Now, Madam Chairman, lady from Ohio, I have in fact, mentioned that we need to work toward helping women and minorities get into these infrastructure jobs and the new energy-related jobs. And there has been feedback that we ought not target this specifically toward a particular race, or perhaps toward a particular gender. But when you look at the framework that the Congressional Black Caucus has laid out, that we need to target it toward those census tracks where there is a dearth of persons who have these kinds of jobs, or who are unemployed, we will find, much to many people's amazement, that there's a great deal of poverty among minorities, and there certainly is a great deal of poverty among women who find themselves increasingly heading households and providing the greatest source of income.

I thought it was very interesting that Maria Shriver recently did a study that really elucidated the fact that women were providing a greater and greater amount of the family income. And so this is something that I think the Congressional Black Caucus is raising in a very timely manner. And with that I would yield back to the gentlelady from Ohio.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very, very much. At this time I want to—we've got obviously a lot of Members here tonight. I thank you all so much for being here. What I'd like to do just briefly is to have Representative JACKSON-LEE just introduce some points, and I'd like at that point for Representative ELLISON from Minnesota to join us in a brief discussion. Representative JACKSON-LEE from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Thank you very much to the distinguished convener, Congresswoman FUDGE from Ohio. I'm delighted to join the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, who has been just superb on gathering us together on what is an enormous crisis. I'm going to take the liberty of mixing a number of issues that I think are crucial to the topic that addresses this question of dealing with homelessness and hunger and joblessness. So I want to let the American people know that when the Congress-

sional Black Caucus set out its multipoint plan, a letter that was sent to President Obama, interestingly enough, the broadness of our concepts dealt with the most deprived and devastated communities.

Those communities are American Indians, Native Americans. Those communities are Hispanics, Latinos, African Americans, women. And I evidence this by the article in The Washington Post on Saturday—it was referred to in our recent caucus by one of my colleagues, "Missing More Than a Meal." And it cites the families, since they've been publicly noted, of Christina Koch, it cites the family of Anajyha Wright Mitchell, and it cites—these are children who are suffering because parents don't have work.

It cites the family, I guess Christina Koch is here noted. And the quote that I think is most potent says, "This more nuanced picture is emerging as the problem has become more widespread. With the economy faltering, the number of youngsters living in homes without enough food soared in 2008 from 13 million to nearly 17 million" children in America. If we can imagine—17 million children are going to bed or waking up or going to school hungry because these breadwinners, single parents, have no jobs.

And so my message today is that this is not a, if you will, an opportunity to do good legislative work. This is a crisis of insurmountable definition. This is at a pinnacle. This is the mountain top, and there must be nothing that stops us from focusing on the necessities of getting work. Let me lay out two or three points that I think are interwoven into this circumstance and the arguments that I think call for immediate action.

My focus has been in training, and I have, I think, a unique perspective to work with those who may be on unemployment. You say, well, they're on unemployment, leave them alone. Well, unemployment is at different levels. If you happen to have been a person who had a part-time job, you know the level of your unemployment. What I'd like to do is to get those people out of those cyclical jobs, one job after another, and put them in training, where they keep their unemployment and they get a stipend so that the electricity can be turned on, the food can be bought. And when they come out on the other end, one, they've been kept out of the unemployment lines for a year, and they come out as a nurses aid or a technician of some sort to get them eligible for these jobs. I think that is imperative.

This weekend, I met with a nonprofit that has about \$22 million in weatherization dollars. I gathered small businesses who had never heard of the opportunities for weatherization, which would create jobs in our community. We also had the General Services Administration, and I think it's important to note that that is such a complexity of getting jobs to small busi-

nesses. What happens is they have what they call GSA lists. I believe the Federal Government should be the great job maker, and therefore, we should make easy the ability for small businesses to access opportunities. So I want to see legislation that demystifies the GSA list. I want to see legislation that tells the Federal Government that they cannot have one narrow way of presenting jobs to America, which is on the Web site.

If you have a job fair and you have the Federal Government there, they don't bring anybody to hire someone on the spot. They tell you to go to the Web site. Well, some people are homeless, are qualified, but they're in a predicament. Many people don't have access to the Web site. So these are simple administrative changes. Let me just add this on the Small Business Finance and Investment Act that the President has talked about.

One of the things in the meeting that I had over the weekend, my friends, on weatherization—and I know they meant well. They came to the meeting, and we had had a pre-meeting, and they came to the meeting, 30 or 40 or 50 people in the room, and they said, Here's the criteria: Your bank account must be secure, and must be, if you will, flourishing. They said that you must have Department of Energy experience, Congressman PAYNE. You must already have had that experience. Some of my people in Texas, no disrespect, DOE? They thought it was the Department of Education. Then they said that you must have, no disrespect to them, you must have past experience. Well, weatherization, these dollars are to build capacity. These dollars are to get small businesses so that they can build capacity, so they can become weatherizers in the future.

So we need to eliminate all these barriers of being able to work under Federal dollars. They're taxpayers dollars. Don't tell them to have Department of Energy experience. Tell them do they know how to put a window in? Do they have enough money to pay workers? And so this is, I think, a way of simplifying. I'm going to yield to the gentleman on these two points if I might. This idea of giving money to States is an abomination. Those of us who have diversity in state leadership, different from the majority party here, see that money going, and we never see it again in the hands of our constituents. That is a crisis.

And then I know that we are on jobs, but let me tell you that this issue is, as I yield to the gentleman, we now have a health care bill that is making its way through the Senate. In that bill, there is a provision about promoting jobs in the health profession, scholarships for doctors and nurses and physicians' assistants. I want to ask the question: How much longer do we have to wait for the distinguished Senator from Connecticut to block health care over and over again and block jobs? And so I'm calling today for reconciliation. If that is a procedure that can

get us moving so that people can have jobs and good health care, I believe they're intertwined together. And with that I would say, this is a time for a fight, a real fight.

And I'd be happy to engage the gentleman from Minnesota on some of the very points that he has raised. And I am delighted to be part of his legislation, which is a magnificent comprehensive jobs effort. And I hope he'll join me in the training aspect as well.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I salute my colleagues with the Congressional Black Caucus for tackling one of the most important issues of the day facing not just African Americans and Latino Americans, but all Americans. Let me share with you that in my District, which covers parts of the Nation's fourth largest city, Houston, TX, our unemployment rate stands at nearly 9 percent. While this rate is more than a full percentage point below the national average, we know at least anecdotally, the unemployment rates for African Americans and Latinos in Houston are much higher.

Yet, this "jobs disparity" is not limited to Houston, data from the Department of Labor indicates that African Americans throughout the Nation today, in the era of President Obama, are still the last hired and the first fired. Specifically, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the unemployment rate for African American men, 20 and older, was 16.5 percent as of October of this year, and 12.4 percent for African American women at the same age level.

Historically, experts have suggested that the anecdote to unemployment is education. However, Labor Department statistics appear to indicate that education, alone, does not level the playing field. In fact, higher education amongst African Americans may strangely enough even make it more difficult to obtain a job. For the first 10 months of this year, as the recession has dragged on, unemployment for least educated workers was the same for African-Americans and the general population. However, in 2009, the unemployment rate for African American college graduates 25 and older has been nearly twice that of their Caucasian American male counterparts, 8.4 percent compared with 4.4 percent. According to a New York Times article published on December 1, even African American college graduates with degrees from Ivy League schools such as Yale, my alma mater, are finding themselves in the ranks of the unemployed.

In addition to the racial dimension of this "jobs disparity," the recent economic downturn has focused a spotlight on a widening gap between employment rates amongst men and women, particularly in the African American community. It has been reported that since the Nation's slowdown has been most pronounced in the manual labor sectors, men with the lowest levels of education have suffered the brunt of the unemployment crisis. CNN commentators recently described our current economic condition as a "man-cession."

According to a recent Bureau of Labor Statistics report, the unemployment rate for African American men aged 20 and older was 4.1 percent higher than the unemployment rate for African American women of the same age group, which was 12.4 percent. This gender unemployment gap among African Americans mirrors a similar gap between Caucasian and

Latino Americans, thus demonstrating a nationwide trend.

Friends, we are in a battle for the hearts and souls of America, literally and figuratively. To win this battle, we must take bold action, like passing health care reform legislation in both chambers of Congress. Madam Speaker, I concur with the assessment that the health reform legislation voted out of this chamber last month in fact a "jobs bill."

As evidence of this, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that last month's slight dip in the unemployment rate was caused by the fact that for the third straight month, hospitals reported solid payroll additions, with 6,800 new jobs created. In the first 11 months of this year, the healthcare sector created 249,700 new jobs, an average of 22,700 new health care jobs each month, according to BLS' preliminary data. Since the start of the recession in December 2007, overall 7.9 million people in America have lost their jobs, while the healthcare sector has created 613,000 jobs.

In an article published in HealthLeaders Media, it was reported that the healthcare sector—from hospitals, to physicians' offices, to residential mental health homes, kidney dialysis centers, and blood and organ banks—grew by 21,000 payroll additions in November and 613,000 payroll additions since the start of the recession in December 2007. The home healthcare services sector reported 7,300 payroll additions in November, BLS preliminary data show.

Recognizing this Madam Speaker, I am working with health care and labor leaders to craft a jobs bill that create innovative new re-training programs in partnership with our Historically Black Colleges and Universities like Texas Southern University in my District or Howard University, here in Washington, DC. These training programs would focus on re-tooling workers for jobs in the growth sectors such as health, biotech, and information technology. In addition to funding for job training, I propose that we provide stipends to those who are unemployed and who participate in training programs to assist them in caring for their families. Along with this, my jobs bill would allow unemployed workers participating in job retraining to continue receiving unemployment benefits.

As a senior member of the Judiciary Committee, I am also working with the DOJ to incorporate into my jobs legislation a measure that would assist ex-offenders who are returning to the job market with strikes against them. In addition to eliminating any barriers for ex-offenders, I am also studying how we can encourage States to suspend criminal prosecution of fathers and other parents who are delinquent in child support so long as they are making good faith efforts to find jobs in this difficult employment market.

Madam Speaker, I also propose that we task the Department of Labor to expand its definition of the unemployed to cover not only those currently receiving unemployment compensation, but also those who have run out of unemployment insurance, known as the long term unemployed. I suspect that if we had accurate data that captured the entire unemployment picture, we would see jobless figures of upwards of 25–30 percent.

In addition, Madam Speaker, I also plan to propose we offer assistance to the underemployed, including thousands of lawyers and other professionals who work as part-timers or

temp workers. Many of these professionals split their time between working for others and operating their own small firms. Furthermore, it has been noted that while larger firms are enjoying the benefit of government funded bailouts, our African American law firms, accounting firms, investment banking firms and media outlets are being left out of the funds directed at stimulating Wall Street. As Comcast and NBC Universal and other firms seek government permission to merge, I intend to work with these companies to ensure that our African American businesses are included, not left out of the deal flow.

Another jobs initiative would focus on creating apprentice and internship programs managed by cities and nonprofits like the Urban League. This is a take off of a Department of Labor that was very successful in the 1970s, which helped our Nation rebound from its last recession.

Madam Speaker, during the 1930s–40s, the FDR administration developed the Work Progress Administration, WPA. The WPA created thousands of jobs and helped lift our Nation from depression. I am drafting legislation that would create a WPA for the 21st century. This concept involves providing stimulus dollars to several Federal agencies such as Interior, Transportation, and HHS to fund large-scale projects.

Under my legislation, the new WPA would include modern-day infrastructure and other projects including making broadband wireless Internet service available for all Americans, not just in wealthier suburban and downtown districts. In addition, we should create high-speed rail and environmentally friendly highways and byways.

Finally, I plan that we work with HHS and the Energy Department to build new Green Hospitals across the country. This project would ensure that our Nation's healthcare facilities are themselves healthy.

Madam Speaker, many of our unemployed constituents in Houston and around the Nation are asking us a simple question: how long, how long before I can find a job? I say to them, not long . . . help is on the way. With the introduction and passage of jobs legislation offered by myself and the rest of the Congressional Black Caucus, help for the unemployed and underemployed, help for small businesses, is on the way.

I appreciate the leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus on this issue and dedicate to my constituents in the 18th Congressional District of Texas that it can count on me to work with my colleagues to deliver in this time of great need. How long, not long, with the help of the Almighty and hard work of my colleagues, help is on the way.

Mr. ELLISON. Let me just say that I just want to tell a story. You know, I was home this weekend, and I was walking along one of the trails that we have in Minneapolis. You know, we've got a lot of parks in Minneapolis. It was cold, and I wanted to get my legs stretched from working so hard last week, so I was walking a long one of our many trails. And I decided to sit down at a park bench, and it looked like a pretty old-looking park bench. You could tell the rust was there.

And when I sat down I noticed that it was sturdy. And we sat there talking to a few friends. But when I got up to

leave, I noticed that there was a little plaque about the size of this phone, and it said on it, WPA, 1934. For 75 years that park bench had been sitting there. For 75 years, that thing has been giving comfort to people who are just walking by. But 75 years ago we had a job crisis then. And our country, our Congress, responded to the needs of unemployed Americans.

□ 2130

We need to respond to the needs of Americans today as people are putting pressure on food shelves, as people don't have money for heat, for lights, as folks who had two and three jobs that were part time now have lost them; now they have no lifeline. We've got to respond to a generation of Americans looking for work today. And where there's extra hurt, there needs to be extra help.

And that means that the Congressional Black Caucus—and other caucuses as well—are focusing on a targeted-jobs bill calling for jobs now, calling attention to an appalling condition where people are unemployed at rates of 25, 30 percent in some communities.

I just want to ask the gentlelady—and I'll ask any of my colleagues. I like the dialogue. I'm not going to give a 20-minute speech.

I will ask the gentlelady, what have you heard as you were standing in the grocery store line? What have you heard when you were walking around your parks in places like Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Ohio, Cleveland? What have you heard? What have you gone through? And what are your folks telling you? Don't give me a bunch of stats. Tell me what your people are feeling. I'd like to know that.

I yield back to the gentlelady.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very much.

Does the gentlelady from Wisconsin or Texas or California wish to respond?

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. I just want to mention to the gentleman from Minnesota, we're neighbors in the Midwest, and of course you know there have been hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs that have been lost in the Midwest over the last 30 years. But since 2008, we have lost more jobs during 2008 than in any—for the last 70 years that these data and statistics have been collected. And so that, I think, is really telling about the attrition of jobs.

I hear people often talking about how horrific the 10.4 percent unemployment rate is. If there were a 10.4 percent unemployment rate within the confines of the city of Milwaukee, we would be dancing in the street with delight.

We have a researcher named Marc Levine from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee who has kept data of the discouraged workers—those people who are not officially unemployed because they're no longer standing there, discouraged workers. And among white men in my community, we have a 17 percent unemployment rate. And

we have a 40 to 50 percent unemployment rate among white men, and of course a staggering statistic, about 30 percent among Hispanic men. But about 17 percent among white men in our community. So it's really a crisis of gargantuan proportions.

Mr. ELLISON. Will the gentlelady yield?

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Yes.

Mr. ELLISON. Have you are ever talked to somebody who's been unemployed for 12 months, 18 months? What does that do to their psyche? What does that do to their spirit? What does that do to their level of joy?

Can anybody answer the question for me?

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. If the gentleman will yield.

Mr. ELLISON. I will yield.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. You are right. And statistics, of course, help to lay the framework for how devastating it is for so many of us who are listening may not have the broadness of it because our constituency goes across all lines.

And what I'll tell you is that people are more and more going to places where there are mass feasts and feeding. And when you go among those people, you hear the stories of mothers and fathers who have lost work. There are now more families coming into these broad feasts or open feeding that we've had. I just participated in one yesterday in my district. And you see the families with little children who you know are dependent—and you made a very good point. I heard it on this floor. These people may have had two and three jobs. That's the kind of person we're looking at when we see these parents whose children are now going to bed hungry, 17 million across America. And what they're saying is that not only can they not make ends meet, but they can't find the ends for the means.

So we have to bypass State governments to get funds directly into the hands of these individuals by way of work. They want work. We've got to break down the attitudes about not building capacity and small businesses, because they could hire these very mothers to do minimum work on weatherization. They could be skilled. We have to pass the health care bill that gives us the kind of work that is available for these mothers.

And I will conclude on this. Do you know, Congresswoman FUDGE, because you're from this area, there is some, I want to call it silliness—and I ask deference for any disrespect that using the word "silly" on this floor might suggest. But we put a tax on steel that China is bringing in and, okay, that's by America. Then we have black businesses who are in the business of transporting pipe or giving pipe to various companies—and when I say "pipe," giving steel to various companies, steel pipe known as oil company tubular goods, pipes. And can you believe that these small businesses that have work-

ers and truck drivers, minority companies that transport this steel, cannot buy any steel from American companies.

So what I would say to the gentlemen, Yes, I hear the pain in our houses of worship. I hear the pain in grocery stores, and I hear the pain when we go to these mass feedings that more people are coming to now in more numbers than I have ever seen before. It just re-emphasizes the fact: Are we going to answer the pain, the call that is being made upon us? And I would hope the Congressional Black Caucus will be front and center on doing that.

Ms. FUDGE. We have been joined by another one of our colleagues, LAURA RICHARDSON from California. I'd like to yield to the Congresslady.

Ms. RICHARDSON. I thank the gentlelady for yielding. I especially want to thank our chairwoman, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, and Congresswoman FUDGE, who's been leading, really, this delegation on an hourly basis weeks on end whether the issues are popular or not.

Tonight I'd like to talk about small business and the impacts of unemployment and what it means to our country and really where the jobs are in this country and why we must address small business.

The unemployment crisis is hurting every region of our country—not just one State, east coast, west coast. It's everywhere. In the district that I represent, unemployment is ranging anywhere between 15 and 21 percent. That's well above the national unemployment rate, and clearly we can no longer stand by idly waiting for someone, even if it's in our other body, to act.

The American people need jobs now. They've already asked it, they've already helped to fund it, but unfortunately the jobs have not been seen on Main Street and on the side streets where many of our constituents live. So let's talk a little bit about small business and why they're so important in this equation.

There are 26.8 million small businesses in the United States accounting for more than 99.7 percent of all employer firms. Those are regular people like you and me who are trying to survive who didn't get a bailout 6 months ago.

Small businesses employ just over half of all of our private sector employees. And likewise, in the second largest district in this United States—which is California, where I'm from—small businesses are an integral part of our economy comprising 90 percent of all of the businesses in our State. More than 50 percent of the employees in California work for small businesses, and there's an estimated 3.7 million small businesses in California.

So why would you ask that I would even talk about that? Let's talk about women and how women are impacted with small business.

Privately held, women-owned businesses in California, where I'm from,

generate more than \$406 billion in sales and employ over 2.8 million people. And when you look at those particular figures and then you break it down to minorities, minorities even further own 4.1 million firms and generate \$694 billion and employ 4.8 million people.

So what is the problem and what is it that I brought to the CBC to contribute in terms of a proposal of what we could do to help? We could help small businesses, and we already have the current framework to do so. It's called the SBA. But unfortunately, as with many government agencies, just because something exists doesn't mean it should stay that way. We can always work to make it better.

So when we consider the SBA that was really established in 1953, there are changes that have to occur. And the one that I'd like to talk about tonight is not all of the wonderful training, not all of counseling—all of that we desperately need—but there's a program today that can change and it can be done now. That's our section 8 services.

Section 8 was established to include access to business development opportunities for businesses within that particular financial area, but there's a problem with it. As far back as 1992, magazines and other individuals have highlighted the problems with the section 8 program. The problem is, instead of creating multimillion-dollar business success stories, the section 8 program consistently graduates companies before they're ready to flourish. It gives them a short period of time—7 years, 9 years—to begin to utilize contracts, and then it throws them out without an umbrella or without a safety net.

I would say if we could do a safety net for some of these other Wall Street firms and financial industries, why aren't we holding our hands out to small business?

This has led to a surprising result that many of us have seen, that companies who were able and who were succeeding with the section 8 program, when they were then bumped out, of course, what were the results?

In 1991, SBA studied 645 former 8(a) companies that were doing fine, but prior to them being kicked off, after that point, 42 percent fell through. We can stop that, and we can change it today by four simple proposals that I have for you.

I propose that we reform and modernize the section 8 program to help more small disadvantaged business enterprises, DBEs, to remain in business and to hire more workers—we were talking about over 4 million workers—by doing the following:

One, extend at least 2 years the 9-year program in which section 8(a) certifies businesses to participate.

Number two, we can reinstate those who already did their 7 or 9 years, and they're kind of at the brink, and with a couple more years of help, they could be back on a level ground. We should extend their time as well.

And then thirdly, we should create a new program that's kind of in the middle ground, not of a major company that's bringing in billions of dollars, but clearly a small business that's hiring 10 people, 20 people in your neighborhood. We need for them to exist.

And finally, we should consider that under this program, eligible companies who are able to participate, we should really grow that revenue, because what was \$100,000 yesterday that somebody made is not nearly enough in terms of keeping a viable company going.

So, in closing, what I'd like to say to our Chair, Ms. BARBARA LEE, and also Ms. FUDGE from Ohio, I applaud the efforts that we've taken. The American people want to know what we're doing. What we're doing is caucuses like the CBC are coming together. We're meeting. We're talking about direct jobs. We're talking about keeping teachers and police officers employed. We're talking about helping small business owners stay alive. That's what we're doing, and we're bringing those proposals to the Speaker, to the President of the United States, and we're asking them to act now.

We're ready to vote. We're ready to do our part. But we need to make sure that these dollars go to the American people, which is where they started from.

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, my good friend and colleague, Representative RICHARDSON from California, did bring up some interesting points, and I can assure you that the passion she showed today is the same passion that the rest of this caucus has, and that is why, in fact, our caucus did indeed send a letter to the Speaker of the House to talk about our jobs initiatives, what we believe should be in a jobs bill.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS OF
THE 111TH UNITED STATES CONGRESS,

Washington, DC, December 9, 2009.

HON. BARACK OBAMA,
*President of the United States,
The White House,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR PRESIDENT OBAMA: As you work with House and Senate Leadership to structure the jobs package, we respectfully request that you include and prioritize the following proposals in the legislation:

DIRECT JOB CREATION AND TRAINING

Utilize language that states that the \$139.3 billion of unobligated funds authorized for expenditure by the Troubled Asset Relief Program should be reprogrammed to be used to create jobs for United States citizens.

Reauthorize language from the Humphrey Hawkins Act, Public Law 95-523, with a new provision establishing a "Green Jobs and Training Trust Fund." The trust fund would be funded by a financial transaction tax similar to that proposed by Congressman DeFazio. If the targets established in the Economic Reports mandated in Title I are not met, funds would automatically be disbursed from two separate trust funds to a list of: (1) training programs enumerated in the bill; and (2) a direct public sector jobs program. The training programs would include, amongst other programs:

The Department of Labor's Green Construction Careers Demonstration Program (not yet authorized).

The Department of Energy's Labor's Efficiency and Renewable Energy Worker Training Program (EEREWTP) (authorized in the Green Jobs Act of 2007)—specifically, the Pathways Out of Poverty Demonstration Program.

The Department of Energy's Weatherization Program.

The Job Corps Program.

Grant programs that promote state and local hiring of police, firemen, and other public servants.

Additional programs identified by the Secretary of Labor that: (1) promote energy efficiency consistent with the EEREWTP Program or promote clean energy creation; and (2) provide sustainable employment in the public or private sector.

The government would provide grants to states and municipalities to set up "Green Corps," "Urban Corps," and/or a form of expanded Americorps. These jobs would be low human capital jobs where the ratio of government spending to job creation would be very low. Some activities these individuals would engage in include:

- Home and public building weatherization;
- Greening of public spaces;
- Municipal waste and recycling;
- Public building solar installation and maintenance;

- Forestry; and
- Tutoring or mentoring.

Utilize language throughout the bill that will provide a 10 percent for areas with high levels of poverty such as: Of the amounts appropriated in this [section] the following projects or programs, shall allocate at least 10 percent for assistance in qualified areas of economic hardship: Provided, that for the purposes of this [Title/Section], in general, the term "qualified area of economic hardship" means any census tract or block numbering area, where 20% or more of the population is at or below the federal poverty line. The term "poverty line" means the official poverty line defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

JOB CREATION AND TRAINING

Increase funding for Youthbuild and the 2010 Youth Summer Jobs Program, to allow for the employment of 5 million teens, with a requirement that of the amounts appropriated in this [section] the following projects or programs, shall allocate no less than 10 percent for assistance in qualified areas of economic hardship: Provided, that for the purposes of this [Title/Section], in general, the term "qualified area of economic hardship" means any census tract or block numbering area, where 20% or more of the population is at or below the federal poverty line. The term "poverty line" means the official poverty line defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

Creation of a federal assistance program through the Department of Labor to prepare economically disadvantaged unskilled adults or adults needing retraining for full-time jobs, for a period of 12 to 24 months in public agencies or not-for-profit organizations. The intent is to impart a marketable skill that will allow participants to move to an unsubsidized.

Fully fund the Green Jobs Act, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program, as authorized by the Energy and Independence Security Act, of the amounts appropriated in this [section] the following projects or programs, shall allocate no less than 10 percent for assistance in qualified areas of economic hardship: Provided, that for the purposes of this [Title/Section], in general, the term "qualified area of economic hardship" means any census tract or block numbering area, where 20% or more of the population is at or below the federal poverty line. The term "poverty line" means the

official poverty line defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

Increase funding for the National Service Corps programs with an emphasis on current college students and recent college graduates.

Direct funding to career colleges, technical, and trade schools, community colleges, and universities to train Americans in high-growth industries and healthcare professions, particularly focused on entry-level training and nursing programs, which allow participants to be able to continue to collect unemployment benefits through the period of training and/or allow them to receive a livable wage stipend during the period of training, with a requirement that of the amounts appropriated in this [section] the following projects or programs, shall allocate no less than 10 percent for assistance in qualified areas of economic hardship: Provided, that for the purposes of this [Title/Section], in general, the term "qualified area of economic hardship" means any census tract or block numbering area, where 20% or more of the population is at or below the federal poverty line. The term "poverty line" means the official poverty line defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

Increase funding for High Growth Industries and/or grants for job creation in occupations identified by the Department of Labor as "the "fastest growing occupations and occupations projected to have the largest numerical increases in employment between 2006 and 2016," with a requirement that of the amounts appropriated in this [section] the following projects or programs, shall allocate no less than 10 percent for assistance in qualified areas of economic hardship: Provided, that for the purposes of this [Title/Section], in general, the term "qualified area of economic hardship" means any census tract or block numbering area, where 20% or more of the population is at or below the federal poverty line. The term "poverty line" means the official poverty line defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

Increase funding for Employment and Training Administration, Training and Employment Services, with a requirement to that of the amounts appropriated in this [section] the following projects or programs, shall allocate no less than 10 percent for assistance in qualified areas of economic hardship: Provided, that for the purposes of this [Title/Section], in general, the term "qualified area of economic hardship" means any census tract or block numbering area, where 20% or more of the population is at or below the federal poverty line. The term "poverty line" means the official poverty line defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

Increase funding for Welfare to Work program.

Increase funding for the Second Chance Act (replaced and expanded Prisoner Reentry Initiative) and include language that eliminates or mitigates the bar on ex-offenders from receiving Federal financial aid programs, job-related training, public benefits, and public housing.

Increase funding for pre-apprenticeship programs and the National Apprenticeship programs through the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, with a requirement to that of the amounts appropriated in this [section] the following projects or programs, shall allocate no less than 10 percent for assistance in qualified areas of economic hardship: Provided, that for the purposes of this [Title/Section], in general, the term "qualified area of economic hardship" means any census tract or block numbering area, where 20% or more of the population is at or below the federal poverty line. The term "poverty line" means the official poverty line defined by the Office of Management and Budget. Language modification to allow for Americans to continue

to collect unemployment benefits and/or TANF benefits while in an authorized job training program for up to 12 months.

Expand the Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) under the Older Americans Act to provide job training and employment for older job seekers by lowering it to age 50, eliminate requirement of unemployment—allowing participants to be underemployed, and changing the cap to 35 weekly hour cap employment allowing.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Provide for Hope VI, green projects through the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant.

Rehabilitation of housing through Neighborhood Stabilization Fund which provides for additional construction jobs.

Funding for the Department of Transportation-Federal Highway Administration to allow state and local agencies to move forward on infrastructure projects, of the amounts appropriated in this [section] the following projects or programs, shall allocate no less than 10 percent for assistance in qualified areas of economic hardship: Provided, that for the purposes of this [Title/Section], in general, the term "qualified area of economic hardship" means any census tract or block numbering area, where 20% or more of the population is at or below the federal poverty line. The term "poverty line" means the official poverty line defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

Discretionary funding for Clean Energy technology and manufacturing through the Department of Energy, with a requirement that of the amounts appropriated in this [section] the following projects or programs, shall allocate no less than 10 percent for assistance in qualified areas of economic hardship: Provided, that for the purposes of this [Title/Section], in general, the term "qualified area of economic hardship" means any census tract or block numbering area, where 20% or more of the population is at or below the federal poverty line. The term "poverty line" means the official poverty line defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

SMALL BUSINESS

Language modification to allow the Community Development Financial Initiatives Fund to access capital markets via the Department of Treasury Guaranteed Bond Issuance program.

Expand and expedite the Small Business Administrations Community Express Loan program by reducing the interest rate to 1 percent, particularly focused on areas where local unemployment rates exceed the state and/or high rates of long-term unemployed.

Long-term extension of Build America Bonds, to result in liquidity and a lower interest rate.

Reform and modernize the Section (8) program to assist more small and disadvantaged business enterprises (DBE) remain in business and hire more workers by doing the following:

Extend by at least 2 years the 9-year period in which Section 8(a) certified businesses can participate in the program.

Reform the Section 8(a) program to permit reinstatement of companies who were graduated from the program after nine years.

Reform the Section 8 program to create a new program for small businesses that did not qualify for admission to the 8(a) program or were graduated from the program before the 9 year period expired because their financial resources exceeded maximum limits. Under this new program, an eligible company would be permitted to participate for a period of 7 years or until its financial resources exceeded 300 percent of the maximum amount allowable under Section 8(a).

Language modification to the Workforce Investment Act performance measures in entrepreneurial training to allow for micro-

enterprises to receive Self Employment Training and Technical Assistance from Workforce Investment Boards with a "successful/positive outcome" in order to support and spur further growth of small businesses/microenterprises.

Language to support an appropriation to support payment of Black Farmers claims.

STATE/LOCAL FISCAL RELIEF

With each provision, we would urge you to direct funding through the federal agencies directly to localities: county/city/municipality/college/university or nonprofit organizations, rather than through the state, to be quickly disbursed and used by most economically depressed communities.

Our Nation has suffered substantial unemployment and underemployment over a prolonged period which has imposed significant economic and social costs, particularly in communities of color. We appreciate your attention to these prescriptive measures and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

REP. BARBARA LEE,
Chairwoman, Congressional Black Caucus.
REP. EMANUEL CLEAVER,
Chairman, CBC Taskforce on Economic Recovery.

Ms. FUDGE. At this time, I'd like to bring up a colleague, DONALD PAYNE from New Jersey. Representative PAYNE has joined us many evenings, and it's a pleasure to yield some time to him this evening.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

Let me certainly begin by thanking the gentlelady from California, our distinguished Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, for anchoring this evening's Special Order on job creation. And Ms. LEE continues her diligence in addressing issues that confront our Nation in general, but in particular, the African American community, which has been a laudable effort, and let me again commend her for her diligence.

Let me also commend the gentlelady from Cleveland who comes to us, Representative FUDGE, as a former mayor, and I look at her as the mayor of the CBC.

□ 2045

Why would I call her the mayor of the CBC? Well, because a mayor has to have hands on. The mayor has to deal with all the issues. The mayor has to listen to see what's going on in education and jobs. The mayor is concerned about health care. And it's where the rubber meets the road. And you need someone who has the understanding and the perseverance. And so I would like to commend you again for the outstanding work that you do.

To the Chair of this important job creations committee, Congressman EMANUEL CLEAVER from Kansas City, he does an outstanding job in this.

Since the time is relatively late, we have several more Members, it's a good thing to do, when you have too many, therefore I will cut my remarks short. But let me just say in November we approved a historic bill to reform our

health insurance system to expand access to affordable quality health care for nearly every American. The Affordable Health Care for Americans Act offers security and stability to all Americans, reduces costs and improves our choice.

Let me say that you cannot hold a secure job if the fundamentals are not there for everyone to be able to benefit. And one of the great provisions in the health bill is that there will be an emphasis on job creation because of the expanded health care that will be provided.

After a White House jobs summit on December 3 and a trip to Pennsylvania to meet with citizens of this country who have been affected by this economy, on December 8, as you know, President Obama announced steps that he believed should be at the heart of our efforts to put Americans back to work, to get businesses hiring again. I commend the President's focus on small businesses, infrastructure, and clean energy to provide an influx of jobs in this economy, as well as his emphasis to not just create jobs in the short run, but to also shift America away from consumption-driven growth to a focus on enhancing the competitiveness of American businesses, encouraging investment and promoting exports.

I would, however, push further and urge the President and my colleagues in Congress to expand our focus to address the portion of our population who were already in vulnerable economic positions before the onset of this recession. Prior to December, 2007, the African American unemployment rate was 8.9 percent. In this economy, it has climbed to a disproportionate 15.6 percent.

Madam Speaker, in the great State of New Jersey, unemployment has reached 9.7 percent. However, the largest concentration of unemployed falls in the cities of Trenton and Newark, New Jersey, where I live, where a large portion of our State's minorities live, and the unemployment rate surpasses 14 percent. While New Jersey reached its highest level of unemployment in 34 years, Newark, a part of my district, has experienced the same rate of over 14 percent since 1994.

These startling facts call attention to the need to not simply restore our Nation to its pre-recession state, but to create a stronger, more inclusive plan to address the intersection of unemployment and poverty, and develop long-term strategies to confront this.

Madam Speaker, I believe that the key to our strategy is education. I urge the development of a multipronged approach not only aimed at creating new jobs but infused with education and job training. We must work diligently and deliberately to harness the skills of all people. The absence of this particular focus will cause severe and lasting damage to generations of Americans, particularly of color.

And so therefore, as I just shorten my remarks, I think that education,

training, and expansion of current programs like the Job Corps, where we have an infrastructure, where we can have intensive training, where we can have health care, where we can go on to have GEDs, would be one way to create jobs and train people.

I have much more, and I would hope that we can have the remainder put in the RECORD. But I will yield back the balance of my time in deference to my colleagues.

Madam Speaker, let me begin by thanking the gentlelady from California, our distinguished Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, for anchoring this evening's Special Order on job creation. Her continued diligence in addressing issues that confront our nation, in general, but in particular the African Americans communities and she has been laudable, and let me commend you again for your diligence.

Let me congratulate the gentlelady from Cleveland, Representative FUDGE, who comes to the Congress as a former major and knows well of everyday problems, where the rubber meets the road. Let me also congratulate Representative EMANUEL CLEAVER from Kansas City for his leadership as Chairman of the CBC jobs task force.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join the other Members tonight to talk about job creation, specifically in the African American community.

In November, we approved a historic bill to reform the health insurance system to expand access to affordable, quality health care to nearly every American. The Affordable Health Care for America Act offers security and stability to all Americans, reduces costs, improves coverage and preserves our choice of doctors, hospitals and health plans, BUT holding a secure job is the foundation of many of the provisions decided upon in the bill. That being said, in addition to the nation's 10 percent unemployment rate, it is clear why the President has placed strong emphasis on job creation in the past few days. After a White House Job Summit on December 3rd and a trip to Pennsylvania to meet with citizens of this country who have been affected by this economy, on December 8th, as you know, President Obama announced steps that he believes should be at the heart of our efforts to help put Americans back to work and get businesses hiring again. I commend the President's focus on small businesses, infrastructure, and clean energy to provide an influx of jobs in this economy, as well as his emphasis to not just create jobs in the short run, but to also shift America away from consumption-driven growth to a focus on enhancing the competitiveness of America's businesses, encouraging investment, and promoting exports.

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positions before the onset of this recession. Prior to December 2007, the African American unemployment rate was 8.9 percent. In this economy, it has climbed to a disproportionate 15.6 percent.

Madam Speaker, in the great state of New Jersey, unemployment has reached 9.7 percent; however, the largest concentration of unemployment falls in the cities of Trenton and Newark, where a large portion of the state's minorities live and unemployment has surpassed 14 percent. While NJ has reached its highest level of unemployment in 34 years, Newark—part of my district—has experienced the same rate of 14.3 percent as recent as 1994.

These startling facts call attention to the need, to not simply restore our nation to its state pre-recession, but to create a stronger, more inclusive plan to address the intersection of unemployment and poverty and develop long-term strategies.

Madam Speaker, I believe that the key to this strategy is education! I urge the development of a multipronged approach, not only aimed at creating new jobs but infused with education and job training. We must work diligently and deliberately to harness the skills of all people! The absence of this particular focus will cause severe and lasting damage to generations of Americans, particularly those of color, and the future of our workforce.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to develop policies that will expand our focus to offer additional support for communities that have long been affected by high unemployment rates.

With that, thank you once again, Congresswoman LEE for the outstanding work that you are doing.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so much. And I want to commend Representative PAYNE, not just for his words, but the fact that he is indeed the historian of our caucus. And it's just always a pleasure to have him put things in perspective for us. Thank you so much.

At this time, I would like to yield to our friend and colleague from Georgia, DAVID SCOTT, Representative SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Thank you so much, Ms. FUDGE. I just want to say how proud we all are of you and your leadership that you are providing on the floor for this hour, that you have been going forward with all of this year. And I certainly want to single out for special praise our distinguished chairlady of the Congressional Black Caucus. The good Lord has surely brought us the right person at the right time to lead this caucus in a very serious sea of turbulent waters. And so, Ms. BARBARA LEE, I just want to personally thank you for that leadership as we go forward.

Let me start at the very beginning, because I think that we need to understand what we are referencing when we

use the words “targeting” and “focus.” Let me just say clearly, yes, we are the Congressional Black Caucus. But we are talking about targeting and focusing our efforts on the basis of need, no more, no less, than what they did for Wall Street. You all may remember, I serve on the Financial Services Committee, and it was Secretary Paulson, the Republican Secretary of the Treasury, who rushed over here to Capitol Hill with just two pieces of paper, two pieces of paper. And said that the sky is falling down on Wall Street, and we needed to target and focus \$700 billion or \$800 billion he said, on Wall Street.

And then he went on to say, not only targeted to Wall Street, but targeted to specifically 12 to 15 bank and financial houses. Targeted, because that was where the source of the problem he felt. And he analyzed that source of the problem by saying it's because the credit markets are frozen. There is no lending. And we have to move.

Well, we sent him back, and we said, well, we can't do that; we have to have something more moving. And he came back and said, Well, let's target it to troubled asset relief, or TARP, so that we can relieve these troubled assets with these financial institutions. Again, targeted. The point I'm trying to make is that we know the value of targeting where the problem is.

All we are simply saying here is we have troubled assets. What more troubled assets in our financial institution can we have than the job and our homes? And it is more troubled assets than the 12 or 15 houses to unfreeze the credit, which we did, and which we moved to. We must do the same here. We are advocating strongly that we take the remaining \$200 billion of this TARP money and focus it on where these troubled assets are now, jobs, and to saving our homes. This is what the American people want and need.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me just say, we have a soaring economy. But we must understand that it, too, is targeted. We have roughly 300 million people in this country. Eighty percent of those are targeted at the bottom one-third of the economic wealth stream of our economy. That means roughly 80 percent of that 300 billion, that is 270 million people, are targeted there.

And I bring that point up because, simply, our economy runs on mass consumption. Stores require spending. And it means that you need as many people going in that store buying that carton of milk or going into that auto dealership buying that car as possible. That is why this effort now—we've taken \$700 billion, we've targeted the top; we need to take this \$200 billion and target it at the bottom, and target it for jobs, and target it related to housing because they are so interconnected.

The most immediate thing we can do is what, again, we in the Congressional Black Caucus, 10 of us stood firm on the Financial Services Committee and said, no, no. No more. You're going to have to respond to this. If we did no

more than anchor our movement in terms of providing moneys and target it into those areas that have high foreclosure, high closed and abandoned buildings and homes, and target money into those communities to fix up those homes, get them back on the market, that will save the housing prices and stop them from falling but will also create jobs in the most meaningful way for the very people we are trying to target it for. We need to also target money to help people who are losing their jobs to stay in their homes.

And secondly, we've got to target jobs to those people who no matter what you say about a rising tide lifts all boats, it doesn't. Many people are left behind. And nowhere is that more specific than in the African American community of African American males.

I will just recall in my closing to you this evening, we realized this, and we put the Manpower Training Act, and we targeted that. We realized this point, and we put forth what was known as the opportunities and industrialization centers into these communities where we paid for the salaries and the training, and for the individuals to go on to the jobs so that they not only are trained for the jobs that are existing, but they are actually placed in those jobs. There are new jobs coming, and they've got to be trained for them.

Madam Chairwoman, I just want to thank you again. I appreciate this opportunity, and again, I'm very proud of my colleagues and what we are doing. Thank you.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very, very much, Representative SCOTT. We so much appreciate your thoughtfulness, quite frankly, and showing a real difference between what is happening on Wall Street and Main Street.

I would like to now, Madam Speaker, yield to our chair, our Chairman RANGEL, to give us some words of wisdom which I'm sure he is going to do this evening.

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RANGEL. Once again, I want to thank Judge Congresswoman FUDGE for taking the time out as well as our leader, BARBARA LEE, for showing the depth of commitment that we in the Congressional Black Caucus have not only for our communities, which traditionally, historically have borne the blunt of historic economic setbacks, but for the entire country, because in my experience, it appears as though our great Nation's national security is at stake.

We can talk about the terrorists, we can talk about those that are out to destroy our way of life, but we can destroy our own way of life because what made America great is not the bankers. It is those people that thought in this great country that they could aspire, that they could work hard and there would be no limits on what they can achieve.

But unemployment is more than a statistic. Loss of a job means more

than losing your house and losing your health care. It also means losing your dignity. And I cannot foresee how it's possible to have an economic recovery and have a jobless state of the economy. It seems to me that more important than the exchange of stock showing that America is willing to take risk is, what does America think about its hope, its future for its children? It seems to me that what makes America so great is what we think we can achieve. And whether you talk about current unemployment, you have to consider those people who had no hope before the setback. What happens to a person that is not included in the statistic? What happens to a person that knows there's no job at the unemployment office? What happens to a person that has given up hope?

Even if the so-called economy recovers, where will their will be to exercise the skill that perhaps has been lost? And how do you regain hope once that is lost.

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And so what I hope that we understand as a Nation is that it is not just those who are suffering out there, who are losing sometimes their family as well as their jobs, but it happens to be something that's going to affect the well-off, because the more we expand those people who have no money to spend, the more our small business people have no reason to be in existence.

And so we can talk about the stock market, but the world is not turning on our stock market; it's turning on the will of the American people. Internationally, if we begin to look, as we have in so many communities, as a developing nation, not having the will, not having the resources, not being able to feed our children, not being able to provide health care for our children, what is the difference in a mother or father's heart whether you are in a developing country, whether it's in the Middle East, whether it's in Africa; the love for your children has to be the same no matter what country you're in. If you can't feed your child, if you can't educate your child, if you can't point out how great your country is in terms of opportunity, then what makes us different as a great nation from those who are trying to achieve economic leverage?

And so, even though the hour is late, and I am late in getting here, make no mistake about it that you will be hearing from the Congressional Black Caucus every day, whether it's going to be on the floor, whether it's going to be in our districts, because there is something that brings us here more than just our conscience; it's that most of us know exactly what unemployment and the pain of unemployment is, the loss of dignity of unemployment. And then we have our families, and then we have our communities.

And so we really believe that for those people that believe that we don't

understand, before this Congress ends, the President and this Congress, we truly understand that this is a threat to our national security, and as Americans, as patriots, and as those who advocate a strong economy and a strong workforce, we will be glad to let you know that we will be doing all and everything that we can, and we've got to get the job done.

Thank you so much for yielding me this time.

Madam Speaker, the recent November jobs report offers encouraging signs that the Recovery Act is indeed working and that the economy has started to grow. Over the last three months, job losses have come down to the lowest level in two years. But the report is also a sobering reminder of the need to continue to advance policies that stimulate job creation and support the needs of American families and businesses that are struggling.

Nearly 16 million Americans are jobless, up 558,000 from last month. Unemployment is more than just a number—it's a measure of suffering. It's that many more children living in poverty. It's that many more families subsisting off of food stamps, which now feed 1 in every 8 Americans and nearly 1 in every 4 children.

An economic recovery plan focused on salvaging Wall Street, credit-frozen banks, and slumping American automakers—while all right and good—is not a meaningful recovery if it does not help struggling families.

That's why the Obama Administration, in addition to all of its great work in turning this economy around, hosted a jobs summit last week aimed at putting Americans back to work, and I am looking forward to working with the President to do just that. President Obama's Recovery Act has already resulted in as many as 1.6 million Americans gaining jobs.

But unemployment remains at crisis levels. In New York City, the jobless rate for people 16 and over has increased over the past year by 73.7 percent. Half of the city's residents who are near poverty report experiencing three or more hardships at once, including falling behind on rent, not filling a prescription, or being unable to purchase enough food. The President's efforts to stave off depression and economic collapse have helped, but millions of Americans are saying, "Tell that to my landlord." Rebounding economic statistics mean little when so many Americans are still struggling economically.

Over the course of the next few weeks, creating jobs will be my first and foremost priority. I look forward to working with the President and my colleagues in Congress, including members of the Congress Black Caucus.

African American and Latino families are among those that suffer the most from a recession because they are disproportionately impacted by a weak economy and do not have the safety net enjoyed by others. The unemployment rate for all African-Americans is about 50 percent higher than the nation as a whole, and more than 1 in 4 low-income Latinos in New York reported losing their jobs in the past year. We must offer fresh and bold solutions to cultivate an economy that works for us all. Not just the wealthy. Not just the politically connected. But all of us.

Not only is America hurting; so are our kids. New York City has 200,000 disconnected

youth on its streets, kids ages 16 to 24 not in school and without employment. New York houses more kids in state prisons than it does on college campuses. Nowadays, it isn't just high school dropouts who are out of work. Americans from all economic groups are falling prey to a shrinking workforce, whether it's the hospital worker laid off after toiling at the same job for decades, or the college graduate having a tough time finding a job. In fact, Black college graduates are having a tougher time finding employment than their White counterparts, both those with and without a degree. We are all vulnerable, and we all deserve a helping hand in pulling through these difficult times.

There can be no excess of good ideas to combat this crisis sweeping our nation. One thing we can do, and do immediately, is extend unemployment insurance. It is urgent that we provide out-of-work Americans with instant relief. Additionally, the White House has committed itself to expanding green job opportunities through the Recovery through Retrofit program. These are good green jobs that can't be outsourced.

We must enact aggressive measures aimed at employing our young people at this critical time. The Administration is launching its "Educate to Innovate" campaign to improve participation and performance in the sciences through partnerships with foundations, nonprofits, and science and engineering societies. National service programs must be well funded, and we must develop an ambitious strategy to urge our youth to participate in them.

In the House, I am working with my Democratic colleagues on a jobs package that would include additional funding for infrastructure projects, like highway construction and renovation, bonds for building schools, and the expansion of the successful Build America Bonds program, already funding several infrastructure projects across the country. These projects are designed to put Americans immediately to work, all while making America safer and stronger.

In an effort to boost small business creation and tackle credit-freeze, we are anticipating expanding small business loans, providing fixes for community banks, and extending small business and bonus depreciation provisions from the stimulus package. Even the creation of green empowerment zones—those areas where at least 50 percent of the population has an unemployment rate higher than the state average—would provide tax incentives to businesses that hire individuals who live and work in those areas that are most suffering.

We are in the midst of a national emergency, but as a unified people, looking after each other, we will get through this stronger and far more prosperous.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. We so much appreciate your being with us.

Now I would like to yield to the person who has really gotten me through most of this year, our representative from the Virgin Islands, DONNA CHRISTENSEN.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Congresswoman FUDGE. And thank you for the great job you're doing in pulling us together every week.

We had a press conference last week—and I agree with AL GREEN when

he said we shouldn't even have to call it, not when unemployment in our communities is over 15 percent, even over 30 percent in some, and 50 percent when we look at young African American males, not when our CBC foundation can tell us about the lack of jobs for black males who have not completed high school or who have just completed high school compared to other people with similar educational levels.

The stark gaps in unemployment for African Americans, American Indians, Latinos, and Asians cry out for a remedy, one that responds to those who are most in need and at risk. If no one else will answer tonight, the Congressional Black Caucus is answering, and we will answer every day until we turn the unemployment rates and every other inequity in our communities around.

I've had the opportunity, on a small scale, to see what can happen with programs like these because we don't have to go through the State and the local distribution. We will soon graduate 26 formerly unemployed men and women who knew nothing about solar water heaters who can now build them from scratch and install them. They have an opportunity, through the ARRA, the program created by our government, our utility, and a not-for-profit to put their training to work in real jobs. And what these young men have told us is please continue these programs and expand them for us. That is what we are here to say on behalf of them and the millions of others who need work today.

I want to just say that the same thing applies to health care jobs; they are needed in all of our communities on every level. This is a job industry that is growing and will continue to grow as we pass health care reform. There is a great opportunity for our communities in health care to create jobs.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Rev. EMANUEL CLEAVER, Congressman, and our Chair, BARBARA LEE, for being so aggressive in working and moving the Congressional Black Caucus and using us to move our caucus towards the creation of these jobs, and to thank our President for making job creation a central part of his agenda. We are his strongest allies and supporters and advocates. And advocating, as we do for our community, we are working to ensure that the benefits of his Presidency reach everyone in this Nation.

Democrats don't plan to go home until we do something meaningful to create jobs. The Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa season must be one of hope for everyone. That is our commitment as Democrats and as the Congressional Black Caucus; our commitment is to make sure that these benefits extend to everyone, especially those who are suffering most, especially those in the African American community and other communities of color, not just for a few, not just for some, but for everyone living in this country.

I yield back.

I am pleased to join our Chairwoman BARBARA LEE, Congresswoman FUDGE who does such a great job of organizing these special orders every week and my other CBC colleagues to speak to the critical importance of creating jobs for the American people, as we Democrats are poised to do, but particularly in the hardest hit African American communities who when America sneezes gets pneumonia, when a breeze blows elsewhere we get a hurricane, and when surf is high for everyone else we get a tsunami.

We had a press conference last week, that as Congressman AL GREEN said and I agree, we should not have had to call.

Not when the unemployment in African American communities is over 15 percent, even over 30 percent in some areas and higher in some age groups. Not when the projections are as they always have been that joblessness will continue longest for us—especially for African American males.

Not when the CBC foundation issued issues a very telling report that has clearly demonstrated the severe gaps in employment for black male high school graduates or who have not finished high school even in unskilled jobs compared to every other group with the same educational levels.

And not when universities and others across our country have reported studies that clearly demonstrate racial bias in hiring and all of this is only the tip of the iceberg.

The stark gaps in employment for African Americans and Latinos cry out for a remedy—one that responds to those who are most at need and at risk and, if no one else will answer, we the Congressional Black Caucus is answering today and every day until we turn around the unemployment rates and every other inequity in our communities.

There is just no way that we will stand by and let our community be left behind as the country recovers from the recession and the focus turns, as it must, to job creation. And, we are determined that our community will not be left behind as we turn the page to a new green economy and as we embark on a reform of our healthcare system. Both will require massive training programs and a major expansion of our workforce on every level. This is an opportunity that we cannot afford to let pass us by—we won't!

I have had the opportunity to see on a small scale what can happen with programs funded thru ARRA because in my district—the US Virgin Islands—state and local are treated as one entity, so I do not have to depend on the state to distribute funds at the local level.

We will soon graduate 26 formerly unemployed men and women who knew nothing about solar water heaters soon who can now build and install several models from scratch. They are now in their practicum installing them in government youth and senior facilities. I was so impressed as they explained things I will never understand. They have an opportunity now with a program created by government our utility and a not for profit to put their training to work in real jobs.

But what the student-trainees we met with Paul Larsen, Dean Doctrine and Kahlil Simone—begged us was that we continue this program and provide them with even greater opportunities.

This is what we—on their behalf and on behalf of millions of others—are asking this Congress and our President to do now.

And the same applies to health care jobs. They are needed in all of our communities. Community health workers, allied health techs and nurse techs will be needed to meet the demand of the newly insured, they will be the key to eliminating health disparities in our communities, and open a door to even more opportunities. Right now the Department of labor has 200 million dollars available for training for healthcare jobs out of the ARRA, we need to continue and expand that going forward in the jobs bill this body will pass and we need to ensure that the communities that suffer the greatest disparities are targeted with these programs for job creation in this industry where the demand will only continue to grow.

Health care provides a great opportunity for the now un- or under-employed to lift themselves out of poverty, to improve the health of their communities and to raise our nation's standing for all of the health indicators for which—like infant and maternal mortality as well as general health status we lag behind everyone of our industrialized global partners.

I would like to thank the Jobs Taskforce led by our colleague, Reverend EMANUEL CLEAVER, and our Chair BARBARA LEE for aggressively moving to ensure that communities like ours which are distressed and the people who live there will not continue to be marginalized by post racial wannabees.

As was said at the press conference in response to those who would make this a racial issue—if it is, it is not because we made it so. It is made so by the fact that the communities with the highest unemployment and the highest rates of poverty are African American, American Indian and other communities of color.

And for those who want to make this a fight between the CBC and the President—nothing could be further from the truth!

The White House unfortunately has too many advisors to whom the distress and misery in our communities are if not invisible, are not clearly seen and definitely not felt!

It is our responsibility to be the advisors and the advocates on the other side, on the side of those who have felt and borne the brunt of every hard time, every recession or depression long before and a whole lot longer than anyone else in this country.

We are our President's allies, supporters and strongest advocates. In advocating, as we do for our community, we are working to ensure that the benefits of his presidency reaches every corner of this nation, and that his presidency surpasses every other through the prism, not just of history, but of what happens today to improve the lives of those most in need.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, we thank you for, once again, allowing the caucus to come and share with you our views. I want to thank all of the members of the caucus who came tonight. I think it was a very, very interesting and dynamic discussion.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, the Nation's unemployment rate is alarming—over 10 percent of our citizens are unemployed. However, African Americans have been hit harder by the recession. Nearly 15.6 percent of African Americans are unemployed. My congressional district has an even higher unemployment rate, of 17.1 percent, and is one of the poorest communities in the country. Many parts of the Greater Cleveland area suffer from abject pov-

erty and unemployment. Nearly one in every four Cuyahoga County residents lives below the poverty line. These unemployment rates demonstrate that Americans need and deserve a more concerted federal effort to reduce poverty and create jobs. We must do more to help curb our Nation's problem and create jobs for our people.

One reason I came to Congress was to help struggling Americans in my district. My number one priority is to promote policies that create jobs and spur economic development. I have consistently advocated for such policies this year.

In the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, Representative LOEBSACK and I introduced the sectors amendment, which helps individuals and businesses by bringing together multiple stakeholders with a common interest in developing and implementing workforce development strategies that contribute to local and regional growth. The purpose of Sectors is to prepare individuals for jobs that are available in their communities now. Sector approaches draw upon the expertise of many partners who improve worker training, retention, and advancement by developing cross-firm skill standards. It promotes career development, job redefinitions, and shared training, while supporting capacities that facilitate the advancement of workers at all skill levels, including the least skilled. An emerging body of research demonstrates that sector strategies can provide significant positive outcomes, including job attainment, increased wages, and greater job security.

As we work to ensure that all Americans have access to affordable health care, I authored an important provision in the Affordable Health Care Reform Act. This provision requires the Advisory Committee on Health Workforce Evaluation and Assessment, established by the bill, to monitor the adequacy of the health care workforce and report workforce shortages. This will ensure the creation of job opportunities, where necessary, for constituents of the Eleventh Congressional District of Ohio. My provision will guarantee a rapid response to shortages in the health care workforce, such as Health Information Technology, nursing, primary care physicians, pediatrics and other specialists.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides \$19 billion for the U.S. to take the lead in health information technology. It establishes standards for a nationwide electronic exchange and health information to improve quality and coordination of care by 2010. Earlier this year, I introduced the Health Information Technology Public Utility Act. This bill will assist all health facilities transition to computerized health records. Ursuline College, an all-women's school in my district has created a curriculum responding to this need. Sister Diana Stano, President of Ursuline, has a health IT program that facilitates the expansion of my district's health information technology workforce. This program is more important at a school like Ursuline, because nearly 30 percent of the population is comprised of students from lower socio-economic groups or first generation college students. These students will now have an opportunity to move straight from training to sustainable employment.

Currently I am working with Chairman TOWNS and Representative PATRICK MURPHY on legislation that will not only assist students

with private education loans but also create jobs following college. The proposal allows college graduates to swap a portion of their private student loan debt for a federally subsidized loan with a lower interest rate. As a result of the conversion, the federal government would earn \$9 billion for school construction, improvements for primary and secondary education facilities and institutions of higher education.

We must provide financial support for students to complete trade certifications or college degrees. Education is the only way to end the cycle of poverty.

We must encourage innovation in lending so small business and those in minority communities have access to capital.

We must aggressively advocate for loan modifications to reduce foreclosures and keep Americans in their homes.

In short, we need a concerted effort from the Federal government to expand access to the critical services and resources for minority communities. The exaggerated rate of Black unemployment is problematic for the entire Nation. These families, and those in disproportionately affected regions, need a solid pathway out of poverty.

By re-training workers in expanding industries, instead of those that are shrinking we can move people out of poverty.

Targeted assistance to Americans disproportionately suffering from the recession is crucial to reducing the unemployment rate for all.

PREVENTIVE SERVICES TASK FORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SCHMIDT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about a very important issue, it's about breast cancer and my expressed disappointment and disagreement with the recent set of recommendations issued by the United States Preventive Services Task Force, this simple little 12-page study that, quite frankly, has angered millions of women across the United States. I highly recommend people to take the 15 minutes that it will take to read this report and see just how flawed it really is.

As most Americans know, especially women, breast cancer represents a major health threat both in this country and across the world. Breast cancer is one of the most frequently diagnosed forms of cancer for women, and it ranks second only to lung cancer in terms of cancer-related deaths.

In 2008, an estimated 250,000 cases of breast cancer were diagnosed in the United States, and 40,000 women lost their lives to this terrible disease. These 40,000 deaths represent, however, a significant reduction in mortalities compared to 20 years ago. In fact, since 1990, the mortality rate for breast cancer has decreased approximately 30 percent. Medical experts attribute this dramatic decrease to both improved

treatment methods and to the widespread and regular use of early detection techniques such as mammograms.

Despite these positive gains and despite the thousands of lives that breast cancer screening has saved during the past two decades, the United States Preventive Services Task Force recently issued new recommendations advocating, get this, against routine mammograms for women younger than 50, biannual mammograms for women 50 to 75, no mammograms at all for women older than 75, and actually recommended against teaching women the proper and important method of self breast examinations; they don't want medical experts to show them how to do a self breast exam.

In coming to these conclusions, the Task Force—which, by the way, did not include a single expert in mammography or oncology—reasoned that the physical and psychological harms associated with breast cancer screening outweigh the benefits for women younger than 50 years of age. The task force then explained that the harms it was concerned about included unnecessary tests and biopsies, and the general inconvenience, stress, and—get this—anxiety caused by potentially false positive screening results.

Personally, I was appalled and shocked to think that we might have a little bit of anxiety thinking that we might have felt something in a self breast cancer exam or that a mammography might have showed a shadow that was a little inconclusive and that we might need follow up, that we might have anxiety with that. And since for most of us it will be a false positive, we really don't need to have that anxiety. I was appalled because, yeah, you have a little anxiety, but think of the joy that you have realizing it was a false positive. And think about the relief that you have knowing that you now have the ability to fight a disease when you find it at its earliest and most preventable stage.

My concern is what these recommendations will do for women who should be receiving annual breast exams both now and in the future. Because what the government report is essentially telling women is that they should forgo proven methods of detecting breast cancer because in the aggregate screening methods don't save enough lives to outweigh the discomfort, inconvenience, and yes, the report talks about the cost.

Quite frankly, this is not just bad advice, this is awful advice. And I believe it will result in countless unnecessary and preventable deaths for women who do not avail themselves of screening techniques that could and would detect breast cancer at its earliest and most treatable stages and, yes, save lives.

For example, the task force downplayed the importance of self breast examinations. In doing so, the task force reasons that having a medical professional demonstrate the proper method of self-examination is insignificant

to the cancer detection, and that too many women would suffer, again, anxiety from false positive results. But the report ignored a very important question; how many women have had their lives saved because of a simple self breast exam?

Perhaps the anxiety for those who don't understand what they have uncovered is less important than the one person who actually finds something and saves his or her own life because, yes, men also get breast cancer.

I also oppose the task force's recommendations because they represent an unfortunate and dangerous step back in the fight for health care equality for women. I was in the State legislature in Ohio for 4 years, and I uncovered this. It was through my insistence that insurance companies in Ohio pay the true cost for mammograms for women in Ohio. Recommendations like this task force's will serve to weaken State mandates like Ohio's, and they will ultimately lead to a rationing of preventative care across the country.

For example, according to language in the health care bill just passed by the House, the task force's recommendations could give the Secretary of Health and Human Services the power to exclude mammograms and other breast cancer screening techniques from any government-run health care plan or exchange. If you read pages 1317 and 1318 of the bill, you will see that the language in there suggests a slippery slope where this could occur.

Now, yes, it talks about testing and demonstration projects, but it says, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall ensure that a subsidy or reward is provided only if a government task force recommendation is rated as A or B. Well, this task force only graded breast cancer screening for women 40 to 49, as a C, so this bill may not require the Federal Government to cover the cost of preventative care.

The Federal Government may not be required to cover annual screenings for women 50 and older. And the task force recommends that screening should be done biannually for this age group, and not for women over 75 at all. But the Senate bill is even more alarming. Comparable provisions were also included in the Senate proposed health care bill until an amendment was adopted last week.

For example, 2713 of the bill requires that private insurers cover only preventative services that receive a rating of A or B from the task force. Section 4105 of the bill granted the Secretary of Health and Human Services the ability to modify any government coverage of preventative services if consistent with recommendations of the task force. In fact, there were more than a dozen occasions in the Senate bill when recommendations from the task force would influence the availability of health care.

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Now, not surprisingly, the Obama administration and the Secretary of